



THE PHYSICIAN'S *Bookshelf*

MONOGRAPHS IN MEDICINE—Series 1. Editor, William B. Bean, M.D., Professor and Head of the Department of Medicine, State University of Iowa. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1952. 655 pages, \$12.00.

The monographic method can be very helpful in bringing contemporary information to the doctor's desk. This is particularly true in fields where rapid advances have occurred in a very short time and where the average doctor is unable to keep pace with the accumulation of knowledge. The monograph provides a compromise between the monthly medical journal, which is focused on the temporal present, and the fully comprehensive volume which tries to cover the entire field of medical knowledge. The treatment is critical, and digested enough so that the average reader may recognize its utility and significance.

This first volume of a new series of collected monographs covers a wide variety of interests. The subjects have in common only that they summarize work about which there is a wide experimental interest or represent topics which have particular attraction for the editors. The monographs are of much the same type as those published in the quarterly journal *Medicine*. Among the subjects notably well done are those on the Physiology of Body Fluids, Portal Hypertension and Chemical Agents Used in the Treatment of Inoperable and Far-Advanced Neoplastic Diseases.

The reviewer believes there is a place for surveying "the scene from the medium hills, neither staying on the flats of day-by-day affairs nor climbing the high mountain for the grand and inclusive spectacle." He wonders if such attractively written but widely assorted material should not find its way into the magazine periodicals or the loose-leaf systems of medicine. However, since this venture is well begun it is hoped it will be long-lived.

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THE BASIS OF CLINICAL NEUROLOGY—The Anatomy and Physiology of the Nervous System in Their Application to Clinical Neurology—Third Edition. Samuel Brock, M.D., Professor of Neurology, College of Medicine, New York University. The Williams and Wilkins Company, Baltimore, 1953. 510 pages, \$7.00.

This third edition of Brock's book is distinguished from its predecessors mainly by an increase in space devoted to description of the newer techniques in neurological diagnosis, notably, electroencephalography, electromyography and cerebral angiography. This reviewer has always been a little puzzled in how to classify this work; it cannot be considered a textbook of neuroanatomy, neurophysiology, nor yet clinical neurology, yet it treats of all these. It is probably more to be recommended to the serious student of neurology than to the medical student or the general practitioner of medicine, although it could be read with advantage by all. It is particularly instructive in giving a rather personalized evaluation of contemporary work in this now very wide field.

THE HISTORY OF AMERICAN EPIDEMIOLOGY. C.-E. A. Winslow, Dr.P.H., Professor Emeritus, Yale University School of Medicine; editor, American Journal of Public Health; Wilson G. Smillie, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Public Health and Preventive Medicine, Cornell University Medical College; James A. Doull, M.D., Medical Director, Leonard Wood Memorial; John E. Gordon, M.D., Professor and Chairman, Department of Epidemiology, School of Public Health, Harvard University; edited by Franklin H. Top, M.D., Professor of Epidemiology and Pediatrics, College of Medical Sciences, University of Minnesota. Sponsored by The Epidemiology Section of the American Public Health Association. The C. V. Mosby Company, St. Louis, 1952. 190 pages, \$4.75.

In times of rapid scientific and technological advancement, when the rush of new discoveries overwhelms assimilative capacities, it is easy to put aside historical books with the excuse that they have no immediate value and their truths will not decay. Yet it is at just such times that an occasional backward look has greatest value, helping us to relate our meandering course to the main line of development, restraining our enthusiasm for mere novelty and restoring our belief in the ultimate integration of things which at the moment seem hopelessly confused.

The History of American Epidemiology is a bold title, which might cover a book of broad scope, exhaustive in detail, and mainly concerned with the development of the intellectual discipline of epidemiology. Instead, it is the effort of four leading epidemiologists, well qualified by experience and expository skill to trace both the history of epidemic diseases in the United States and the broad outlines of epidemiological thinking in this country from colonial times to the present. Although brevity constrains the authors to merely list many significant events, the references to source materials are adequate for those who wish to go further into special topics. A large part is written in lucid narrative which can hardly fail to arouse wonderment at the tremendous advances in health conservation in the brief period of our national history, and interest in further study.

The most valuable contribution which the book offers to general medicine is a clear exposition of the concept of disease as the resultant of many forces, both internal and external. While most of us comprehend this in a general way, the more precise formulation which we can get from this book should enable us to serve our patients more fully and more efficiently. While not dwelt upon by these authors, the implications of this concept are broad, ramifying into such fields as the organization of medical insurance and group practice. The physician who thinks clearly along these lines will rarely be satisfied with superficial therapy of symptoms, or even the eradication of infection, except in the most trivial of illnesses.

Without burdening the reader with a complete review of medical history, this volume affords one of those brief backward glances which we need from time to time.